

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
ACDA-12 OMB-01 DOE-11 SOE-02 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04
SIL-01 NRC-05 TRSE-00 /103 W
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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4754
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY SUVA
CINCPAC HONOLULU
CINCPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI
CNO WASHDC
COMSUBPAC
COMSEVENTHFLT
CTF SEVEN FOUR
AMCONSUL AUCKLAND POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 00263

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC, MARR, PINT, NZ, US
SUBJECT: VISIT OF USS PINTADO TO AUCKLAND

1. SUMMARY. NUCLEAR POWERED SUBMARINE USS PINTADO DOCKED
IN AUCKLAND AS SCHEDULED JANUARY 16. PINTADO, WITH FULL
RNZ NAVY AND POLICE ESCORT, MANEUVERED ITS WAY THROUGH
MODEST-SIZED AND "VERY IRRESPONSIBLE" GROUP OF BOAT-BORNE
PROTESTORS FORMED INTO SO-CALLED "PEACE SQUADRON" AT HARBOR
ENTRANCE. ON SHORE PROTEST ACTIONS HAVE LARGELY FIZZLED,
INCLUDING TRADE UNION ACTIONS WHICH TO DATE HAVE AMOUNTED
TO SIMPLE REFUSAL TO WORK WHARF WHERE PINTADO BERTHED.
(SINCE NO OTHER SHIPS WERE SCHEDULED TO BE DOCKED THERE,
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THIS CAUSED NO PROBLEMS.) ALL OTHER AUCKLAND HARBOR
ACTIVITIES CONTINUE AS NORMAL. MEDIA COVERAGE HAS BEEN
LARGELY POSITIVE AND SHIP'S CREW AND OFFICERS EXTENDED
WARM CIVIC HOSPITALITY. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT WHILE
MOTIVATION OF PROTESTORS HAS SHIFTED FROM EXPLOITATION OF
AN ANTI-NUCLEAR FEAR TO ONE LARGELY POLITICAL, CONSIDERABLE
PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN LAST SIXTEEN MONTHS TO DIFFUSE

THE NPW ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. JUST ONE MINUTE BEHIND SCHEDULE AT 1331 HOURS
JANUARY 16, USS PINTADO DOCKED AT AUCKLAND'S JELICOE WHARF
AND AMBASSADOR STEPPED ABOARD TO GREET COMMANDER
J. J. MC DONALD AS WELL AS TO MAKE VISIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF
THE SAFETY OF THE VESSEL.

3. ENTRY OF THE PINTADO INTO AUCKLAND, AS EXPECTED, WAS
HAMPERED BY MODEST-SIZED (ABOUT 80 VESSELS) GROUP OF PRO-
TESTORS FORMED INTO A SO-CALLED "PEACE SQUADRON" BLOCKADE
AT HARBOR ENTRANCE. WHILE SMALLER IN NUMBERS THAN THE
"SQUADRON" WHICH GREETED THE USS LONG BEACH SIXTEEN MONTHS
AGO, PROTESTORS WERE HIGHLY DETERMINED AND ALMOST
SUICIDALLY "IRRESPONSIBLE" IN THEIR ACTIONS TO IMPEDE THE
PROGRESS OF THE PINTADO. COORDINATED EFFORTS OF PINTADO,
RNZN FRIGATE "WAIKATO", POLICE BOATS AND RNZN HELICOPTERS
SUCCEEDED IN THWARTING EFFORTS OF ONE BOAT OF THE "PEACE
SQUADRON" TO RAM PINTADO. CO MC DONALD WAS FORCED TO STOP
PINTADO'S SCREWS AT ONE POINT, HOWEVER, WHEN TWELVE FOOT
DEMASTED SAILBOAT, WITH MAN, WOMAN, BABY IN ARMS AND DOG,
CAME UP FAST AGAINST PINTADO'S BOW. AT THE SAME TIME A
MAN WAS IN THE WATER FROM AN OVERTURNED KAYAK ONLY FIVE TO
TEN FEET ASTERN OF THE PINTADO AND PREVENTED THE CO FROM
REVERSING. IT WAS NOT UNTIL A POLICE LAUNCH PULLED THE
SAILBOAT AWAY THAT THE PINTADO COULD RESUME. EFFORTS OF
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THE "SQUADRON" LEADER TO RAM HIS CATAMARAN "PHOENIX" INTO
THE PINTADO FAILED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE NAVY HELI-
COPTERS WHOSE DOWN DRAFT COLLAPSED THE BOAT'S SAILS.
ENTIRE SKIRMISH LASTED BUT 6-7 MINUTES. ONCE THROUGH THE
"SQUADRON", PINTADO AND ITS ESCORTS LEFT THE PROTESTORS
BEHIND AND DOCKED WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT.

4. DEMONSTRATIONS ASHORE HAVE BEEN SMALL AND VERY
INEFFECTUAL. WIDELY PUBLICIZED MARCH SCHEDULED FOR
JANUARY 17 FAILED TO MATERIALIZE WHEN 200 PROTESTORS VOTED
AFTER THE SPEECHES NOT TO MARCH (EITHER BECAUSE OF THE
HEAT OF THE DAY OR THEIR SMALL NUMBERS). AROUND-THE-CLOCK
PROTEST VIGIL AT JELICOE WHARF HAS COLLAPSED.

5. IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE PREVIOUS COMPLETE SHUT-DOWN
OF THE VISITED PORTS BY TRADE UNIONS IN 1976 -- WELLINGTON
IN THE CASE OF THE TRUXTON AND AUCKLAND IN THE CASE OF THE
LONG BEACH -- TRADE UNION REACTION TO THE PINTADO VISIT
HAS BEEN REMARKABLY LOW-KEYED. AUCKLAND WATERSIDE WORKERS
VOTED FOR ONE-HOUR PROTEST STOPPAGE AND A REFUSAL TO WORK
THE JELICOE WHARF. HARBOR BOARD EMPLOYEES UNION HALF-
HEARTEDLY AGREED TO THESE ACTIONS. ALL OTHER ACTIVITIES IN

AUCKLAND HARBOR CONTINUE AS NORMAL. (DEVONPORT FERRIES WHICH STOPPED RUNNING IN 1976 WHEN THE LONG BEACH VISITED, THIS YEAR SOLD TICKETS FOR A SPECIAL EXCURSION TO WATCH THE PINTADO ARRIVE AT DOLS. 2.00 PER ADULT AND 50 CENTS PER CHILD.)

6. TELEVISION, RADIO AND PRESS COVERAGE OF THE VISIT HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE AND LARGELY POSITIVE. PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENTS OF COMMANDER MC DONALD THAT THE ACTIONS OF "PEACE SQUADRON" WERE "VERY IRRESPONSIBLE", AS WELL AS HIS EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION FOR THE HOSPITALITY OF MOST NEW ZEALANDERS, HAVE BEEN WIDELY REPORTED. AT-HOME INVITA-

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TIONS TO THE PINTADO'S CREW AND OFFICERS HAVE BEEN HEAVY WITH MANY MORE RECEIVED THAN CAN BE ACCEPTED. PINTADO'S CREW REPORTS NUMEROUS INCIDENTS OF GOOD WISHES AND INVITATIONS EXTENDED BY PEOPLE ON AUCKLAND'S STREETS.

7. COMMENT: THE HIGHLY IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR OF THE "PEACE SQUADRON" CREATED A SITUATION WHICH COULD HAVE EASILY RESULTED IN A TRAGEDY. IN AMBASSADOR'S OPINION, IT WAS ONLY DUE TO THE SKILL OF COMMANDER MC DONALD, HIS CREW, AND THE EXCELLENT COORDINATION OF THE RNZN AND POLICE THAT

A DEATH OR AT LEAST SERIOUS INJURY WAS AVERTED. THE CONCLUSIONS WHICH WE DRAW FROM THIS ADMITTEDLY VERY LIMITED SAMPLE ARE THAT: (A) THE NPW ISSUE HAS BECOME LESS ANTI-NUCLEAR "DEATH SHIP" AND MORE POLITICAL; (B) THE PROTEST GROUPS ARE SMALLER BUT MORE STRIDENT WITH THE SOFT GROUP
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OF MODERATES HAVING PEELED AWAY; (C) THE TRADE UNION RANK AND FILE ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH BREAD AND BUTTER THAN POLITICAL ISSUES; (D) THE VISIT WAS WELL-TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH THE RELATIVE APATHY OF SUMMER TIME.

8. THE NPW VISITS OF 1976 WERE OPPOSED BY AN AMORPHOUS GROUP EXPLOITING AN ILL-DEFINED FEAR OF ALL THINGS NUCLEAR. MOTIVATION IN 1978 HAS SHIFTED TO ONE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY POLITICAL. OPPOSITION LEADER ROWLING'S PROTEST TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT CARTER WAS A PART OF THIS. (SEE WELLINGTON 0181.) SO TOO WAS THE PRESENCE IN THE PROTEST FLEET OF THREE SITTING LABOR MP'S (EDDIE ISBEY, MATT RATA AND RICHARD PREBBLE). BANNERS PROMINENT IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS REPRESENTED THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF NEW ZEALAND, SOCIALIST YOUTH AND THE MT. EDEN LABOR PARTY. THEIR MESSAGES PROCLAIMED THE SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE AND ADVOCATED THE FREEDOM OF NEW ZEALAND FROM BIG POWER CONFLICTS. IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, EACH OF THESE POLITICAL THEMES IS DIRECTED AT NEW ZEALAND'S ANZUS RELATIONSHIP AS SYMBOLIZED BY THE PINTADO'S VISIT.

9. REMARKABLY THE NEW ZEALAND TRADE UNIONS REMAINED LARGELY ALOOF. WHILE THE PRESIDENT OF THE AUCKLAND TRADES COUNCIL, BILL ANDERSON (AN AVOWED COMMUNIST), WAS OUTSPOKEN AS A PROTEST LEADER, THERE WAS NOT A SINGLE REAFFIRMATION ON THE PART OF THE FEDERATION OF LABOR EXECUTIVE OF ITS CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS OF 1976 AND 1977 OPPOSING NPW VISITS. FURTHER, IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT DURING THIS PERIOD OF ECONOMIC HARDSHIP, THE AUCKLAND TRADE UNION RANK AND FILE AREN'T ABOUT TO FOLLOW THEIR LEADERSHIP INTO A PROLONGED POLITICAL STRIKE, MUCH LESS ONE WHICH WOULD EXPOSE THE WATERSIDE UNIONS INDIVIDUALLY TO A MULDOON BROADSIDE.

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10. WITHOUT DOUBT THE HEAT OF THE SUMMER AND NEW ZEALAND'S TRADITIONAL JANUARY SHUT-DOWN WHEN YOUTH ARE OUT OF SCHOOL AND MOST NEW ZEALAND FAMILIES AWAY ON VACATION HAD A MAJOR

ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROTEST ACTION.
BY AND LARGE, HOWEVER, WE ARE CONFIDENT SIGNIFICANT
PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON THE NPW ISSUE SINCE THE TRUXTON
FIRST CALLED SIXTEEN MONTHS AGO. WITH ADDITIONAL PERIODIC
NPW VISITS, THIS PROGRESS CAN BE MAINTAINED AND EXPANDED.
END COMMENT. SELDEN

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